



Environmental Bulletin

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from the Savannah River Site

Public Invited to Comment

Proposed Plan for Road A Chemical Basin Operable Unit To Be Released

The United States Department of Energy (DOE) will release a Statement of Basis/Proposed Plan on February 10, 2003, describing the proposed remedial approach for the Road A Chemical Basin (RdACB) Operable Unit (OU) at the Savannah River Site (SRS). The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) will also release a draft Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) permit modification for the proposed remedial action for this unit. The plan and draft permit modification will be available for public review and copying at the locations listed below. The public comment period is scheduled for February 10, 2003, to March 25, 2003. These documents were completed to meet the terms of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) and RCRA laws governing the investigation and cleanup of waste units. DOE has worked with the United States Environmental Protection Agency-Region IV (EPA) and SCDHEC to ensure that the remedial approach is consistent with all applicable environmental requirements.

Public information and public involvement activities are conducted throughout the various phases of the cleanup process. Public comment periods are held to receive oral and written comments from the public on proposed remedial plans and actions. In addition, as required by RCRA/CERCLA, the opportunity for public meetings, hearings, and briefings is made available during the remedial process and as requested by the public.

The RdACB OU, approximately 50 ft. long and 30 ft. wide, is located in the southwestern section of SRS, approximately 0.5 miles west of the intersection of SRS Road A (South Carolina Route 125) and SRS Road 6, and approximately 4 miles from the nearest SRS plant boundary. Very little historical information about the OU is available. It is thought that the RdACB OU was a liquid waste disposal basin that received unknown quantities of hazardous and radioactive materials. The exact operational period of the

unit is not known, but historical aerial photography shows the basin existed as early as 1954. In 1973, the basin was backfilled with native soil. No wastes have been deposited since that time. The area surrounding the basin was regraded between 1973 and 1987. In 1997, a fence was placed around the area where the basin had previously existed.

A wetland area is located downgradient of the waste unit, approximately 800 to 1,000 ft. to the south-southwest. The wetland drains into Fourmile Branch, located approximately 5,500 to 6,600 ft. to the west of the RdACB OU.

DOE, EPA, and SCDHEC have reviewed the risks associated with these units. There are no constituents that pose a risk to human health or the environment associated with the RdACB OU. The proposed remedial action consists of the following:

The No Action alternative is the preferred alternative for the RdACB OU. This means that no remedial action will be performed at the RdACB OU. Because there are no risks to human health or the environment, no institutional or engineering controls are required. Because no further action will be taken, the RdACB OU will remain in its present condition. No capital and/or operation and maintenance costs will be involved for this action.

This alternative will be protective of human health and the environment. It is also intended to be the final action for the RdACB OU.

Comments on the Statement of Basis/Proposed Plan and the draft RCRA permit modification are requested by March 25, 2003.

(See Road A Chemical Basin Operable Unit on page 2)

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Road A Chemical Basin Operable Unit

Upon completion of the public comment period, a Responsiveness Summary that addresses public comments will be prepared. The Responsiveness Summary will be made available with the Record of Decision and the final RCRA permit decision, and will be sent to each person who submits comments.

Copies of the Statement of Basis/Proposed Plan are available in the administrative record, which also contains the Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) report for these units. The administrative record is available in the information repositories listed below:

- DOE Public Reading Room, Gregg-Graniteville Library, University of South Carolina-Aiken, Aiken, SC; and
- Thomas Cooper Library Government Documents Department, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC.

Hard copies of the Statement of Basis/Proposed Plan are available at the following locations:

- Reese Library, Augusta State University, Augusta, GA; and
- Asa H. Gordon Library, Savannah State University, Savannah, GA.

Copies of the draft RCRA permit modifications are available for review at SCDHEC during regular business hours, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except legal holidays, at the following locations:

SCDHEC

Bureau of Land and Waste Management

8901 Farrow Road

Columbia, South Carolina 29203

Phone: (803) 896-4000

or

SCDHEC

Lower Savannah District

Environmental Quality Control Office

218 Beaufort St., N.E.

Aiken, SC 29802

Phone: (803) 641-7670

If there is interest in discussing this recommended remedial approach, a public hearing may be requested.

Want More Information?

Comments on the Draft RCRA Permit Modification and requests for public hearings of the Draft RCRA Permit Modification should be sent to: SCDHEC, Attn: John Litton, P.E., Director, Division of Waste Management, Bureau of Land and Waste Management, 2600 Bull Street, Columbia, SC 29201, (803) 896-4000.

Comments on the Statement of Basis/Proposed Plan and requests for public meetings may be sent to: Jim Moore, Westinghouse Savannah River Co., Savannah River Site, Building 742-A, Aiken, SC 29808, 1-800-249-8155, email: jjim02.moore@srs.gov

Copies Available for the Public

SRS NEPA Planning Summary Available

DOE has prepared the 2003 version of the annual *SRS National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Planning Summary* in accordance with DOE Order 451.1B. This document, which is available to the public, describes the status of ongoing NEPA compliance activities, status of Environmental Assessments (EAs), Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analyses (EE/CAs) and Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) and the planned cost and schedule of each NEPA review.

SRS is currently preparing no EAs but anticipates preparation of one or more new EAs over the next 12 months. SRS is currently supporting the preparation of one Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) by another DOE office and does not anticipate any additional PEAs in the next 12 months. SRS is currently supporting the preparation of one Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) and one supplemental PEIS by other DOE offices and does not anticipate any additional PEISs over the next 24 months. SRS is currently preparing no EISs but anticipates initiating one new EIS over the next 24 months. SRS intends to prepare EE/CAs for CERCLA reviews of SRS closure actions. SRS anticipates initiating three EE/CAs in the next 12 months.

The cost information included in the report is current through December 2002. To request a copy, call 1-800-881-7292 or e-mail nepa@srs.gov.

Revised FONSI Issued for Transportation of Radioactive Waste Across SRS

In 1997, DOE prepared an EA (DOE/EA-1218) to analyze the potential environmental impacts of commercial shipments of low-level radioactive waste (LLW) across SRS. Based on the analyses in the EA, DOE determined the proposed action was not a major Federal action significantly affecting the human environment within the meaning of NEPA, and issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) in 1997 which addressed and selected barge/roadway LLW shipments.

DOE now proposes to grant permission to Southern California Edison to use the SRS rail and road systems to transport a decommissioned San Onofre reactor vessel to the Duratek facility in Barnwell, SC. DOE has evaluated the potential environmental impacts of the proposed rail and road transport of the decommissioned reactor vessel across SRS, and determined they would be no greater, and in some cases less than, the impacts of barge and road transport evaluated in DOE/EA-1218. (See Revised FONSI Issued on page 3)

Current NEPA Actions Affecting SRS

• *Disposition of Scrap Metals Programmatic EIS (DOE/EIS-0327)*

This PEIS will evaluate alternatives for disposition of scrap metals from DOE sites that may have been in radiological areas. The disposition options to be analyzed include continuation of the suspension on unrestricted release of metals for recycling, unrestricted release of scrap metals for recycling, and disposal. The Notice of Intent (NOI) for this PEIS was issued on July 12, 2001. A public scoping meeting was held on July 31, 2001, in North Augusta, SC. The draft PEIS is scheduled to be available during March 2003 and the final PEIS is projected for September 2003.

• *Supplemental PEIS on Stockpile Stewardship and Management for a Modern Pit Facility (DOE/EIS-0236-S2)*

This PEIS will evaluate alternative sites (Los Alamos National Laboratory, Nevada Test Site, Pantex Plant, Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, and Savannah River Site) for a Modern Pit Facility, to provide the capability to manufacture plutonium pits for the United States nuclear weapons stockpile. This PEIS will be followed by a site-specific EIS to address the impacts of construction and operation of the Modern Pit Facility at the selected site. The NOI for this PEIS was issued on September 23, 2002. A local public scoping meeting was held on October 29, 2002, in North Augusta, SC. The draft PEIS is scheduled to be available in May 2003, the final PEIS projected for March 2004, and the Record of Decision (ROD) scheduled for April 2004.

• *Supplement Analysis (SA), Changes Needed to the Surplus Plutonium Disposition Program (DOE/EIS-0283-SA1)*

The SA evaluates the impacts of making plutonium (Pu) feed for the Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility from approximately 6.5 MT of Pu materials originally intended for Immobilization. The SA explains how these impacts have been addressed in the Storage and Disposition PEIS (DOE/EIS-0229) and the Surplus Plutonium Disposition EIS (DOE/EIS-0283). The SA and amended ROD are scheduled to be available by the publication date of this issue of the Environmental Bulletin.

• *Supplement Analysis (SA), Disposition of Certain Nuclear Materials (DOE/EIS-0220-SA4)*

The SA evaluates the impacts of disposing of certain materials, including cobalt-60 and thulium-170, as waste, and provides the basis for determining if this existing EIS should be supplemented, a new EIS should be prepared, or no further NEPA documentation is required. The SA compares the materials and the proposed disposal of the materials, to the materials and disposal technologies

evaluated in the SRS Waste Management EIS (DOE/EIS-0217) and the Interim Management of Nuclear Materials EIS (DOE/EIS-0220). The determination and related SA will be made available to the public for information. An amended ROD will be prepared as appropriate. The SA is scheduled to be available during February 2003.

• *Removal, Transportation and Storage of Radioisotopic Thermoelectric Generators (RTGs) (DOE/EA-1351)*

This PEA is being developed jointly by DOE and the United States Air Force (USAF). It addresses: (1) the removal and transportation of 10 Strontium-90 RTGs from Burnt Mountain Seismic Array Laboratory in Alaska to a DOE site or an Air Force facility; and (2) long-term storage of the 10 identified plus about 50 other RTGs. EM-22 has cancelled this NEPA action since the USAF has decided to pursue other options. As such, updates will not appear here in the future.

• *Natural Resources Management Activities at SRS (DOE/EA-0826)*

DOE prepared an EA in 1993 to analyze the potential environmental impacts of continued management of SRS natural resources. Based on the analyses in the EA, DOE determined the proposed action was not a major Federal action significantly affecting the human environment within the meaning of NEPA, and issued a FONSI. In 2000, DOE issued a revised FONSI that determined implementation of a revised Red-cockaded Woodpecker Management Plan would have impacts no greater than those described in the 1993 EA. DOE now proposes a second revised FONSI which will address minor differences between the 1991 and the next version of the SRS Natural Resources Management Plan (NRMP). The NEPA review is on hold until the next version of the NRMP is finalized.

• *Offloading and Transportation of LLW across SRS (DOE/EA-1218)*

DOE prepared an EA in 1997 to analyze the potential environmental impacts associated with commercial shipments of LLW across SRS. Based on the analyses in the EA, DOE determined the proposed action was not a major Federal action significantly affecting the human environment within the meaning of NEPA, and issued a FONSI in 1997 which addressed and selected barge/roadway LLW shipment. A revised FONSI was developed which addresses LLW shipment by rail/roadway. The revised FONSI was signed in January 2003 and updates will not appear here in the future.

(See related article on pages 2 and 3)

(continued from page 2)

Revised FONSI Issued

DOE has determined the new proposal does not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of NEPA. Therefore, an EIS is not required and DOE has issued a revised FONSI.

If you wish to receive a copy of the revised FONSI, or the original

EA and FONSI, please contact:

Andrew R. Grainger, NEPA Compliance Officer
U. S. Department of Energy, Savannah River Operations Office
Building 742-A, Room 185, Aiken, SC 29802
email: nepa@srs.gov or telephone: 1-800-881-7292

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The SRS Environmental Bulletin

For more information on this or other
environmental and compliance activities
at SRS, please contact:

Jim Moore	Lyddie Broussard
Westinghouse	Westinghouse
Savannah River Co.	Savannah River Co.
Aiken, S.C. 29808	Aiken, S.C. 29808
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